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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/824,517	04/15/2004	Wide Hogengout	251859US2CRL	6470
22850	7590	02/18/2009		
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			EXAMINER VO, HUYEN X	
			ART UNIT 2626	PAPER NUMBER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/824,517	Applicant(s) HOGENGOUT ET AL.	
	Examiner HUYEN X. VO	Art Unit 2626	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 December 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 April 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's arguments filed 12/29/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Michell fully anticipates the limitation regarding "delay a merging of the text unit concatenations until the end of the speech segment based on the likelihood values" in that for each frame of a particular spoken utterance, a list of "viable" phonemes is preserved in a "linked list" or "decoding tree". The merging is done at the end of the utterance by "traversing through the list of corresponding pointer entries in the decoding tree". The traversing produces a limited number of best paths or best recognition candidates (*referring to col. 3, line 41 to col. 4, line 13; also it is well known in Viterbi decoding that nodes in the network are not combined or merged together until at the end of the network by backtracking through the network to pick up phoneme sequences to produce best paths or best recognition candidates*).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

2. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

3. Claims 15-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

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4. Claims 15-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as not falling within one of the four statutory categories of invention. While the claims recite a series of steps or acts to be performed, a statutory “process” under 35 U.S.C. 101 must (1) be tied to another statutory category (such as a particular apparatus), or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or material) to a different state or thing (Reference the May 15, 2008 memorandum issued by Deputy Commissioner for Patent Examining Policy, John J. Love, titled “Clarification of ‘Processes’ under 35 U.S.C. 101” – publicly available at USPTO.GOV, “memorandum to examining corps”). The instant claims neither transform underlying subject matter nor positively tie to another statutory category that accomplishes the claimed method steps, and therefore do not qualify as a statutory process. For example, the steps of receiving, mapping, determining, combining, delaying, and outputting are not “tied to” a particular apparatus or machine.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless – (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 1-9, 11-23, and 25-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mitchell et al. (US 6574595).

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7. Regarding claims 1, 13,-15, and 26-27, Mitchell et al. disclose a decoder for an automatic speech recognition system for determining one or more candidate text unit concatenations according to a predetermined criterion and which correspond to a speech segment, the decoder comprising:

a processor arranged to receive a sequence of feature vectors corresponding to the speech segment (*col. 5, lines 43-50 or element 206 in figure 2A*);

the processor arranged to map with different likelihood values the feature vectors to sequences of nodes in a decoding network, every sequence representing a concatenation of text units (*col. 5, lines 50-55 or elements 208-210 in figure 2A*);

the processor arranged to determine one or more candidate node sequences in the decoding network corresponding to the candidate text unit concatenations by implementing a dynamic programming token passing algorithm in which each token corresponds to a node and is associated with a number of text unit concatenations and likelihood values for these concatenations, and wherein a token associated with a node in the decoding network is derived from the tokens associated with the previous nodes in the network (*col. 5, line 50 to col. 6, line 5 or referring to figures 2A-B*);

tokens from different nodes that are to be passed to a common node are combined to generate a new token corresponding to the common node and associated with an identifier for text unit concatenations and likelihood values associated with the previous tokens of said different nodes (*col. 5, line 50 to col. 6, line 5 or referring to figures 2A-B, this is well known in Viterbi decoding*); and

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the processor is further configured to delay a merging of the text unit concatenations until an end of the speech segment based on the likelihood values and output the one or more candidate text unit concatenations corresponding to the speech segment (*referring to col. 3, line 41 to col. 4, line 13; for each frame of a particular spoken utterance, a list of "viable" phonemes is preserved in a "linked list" or "decoding tree". The merging is done at the end of the utterance by "traversing through the list of corresponding pointer entries in the decoding tree". The traversing produces a limited number of best paths or best recognition candidates (referring to col. 3, line 41 to col. 4, line 13; also it is well known in Viterbi decoding that nodes in the network are not combined or merged together immediately but until at the end of the network by backtracking through the network to pick up phoneme sequences to produce best paths or best recognition candidates).*

8. Regarding claims 2 and 16, Mitchell et al. further disclose wherein the processor is further arranged to merge a said token having a said identifier, the text unit concatenations of the said previous tokens being associated with said merged token dependent on their corresponding likelihood values (*col. 5, line 50 to col. 6, line 5 or referring to figures 2A-B, beam search prunes away unlikely sub-word sequences leaving behind only likely sub-word sequences for further processing*).

9. Regarding claims 3-5 and 17-19, Mitchell et al. further disclose wherein said merging is only delayed if the token has a likelihood value below a delay-merge

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threshold (*col. 5, lines 50-67*), and wherein the processor is further arranged to prune tokens having likelihood values below a prune threshold (*col. 5, lines 50-67, beam search prunes away unlikely sub-word sequences*), and wherein the plurality of candidate text unit concatenations in a token are the text unit concatenations with the N-best likelihood values (*col. 5, lines 50-67, only most likely path are retained*).

10. Regarding claims 6 and 20, Mitchell et al. further disclose wherein the tokens are additionally associated with a number of category markers each corresponding to a said text unit concatenation, each category marker being associated with one of a plurality of categories, such that the plurality of candidate text unit concatenations in a token are the text unit concatenations with the best likelihood values in said plurality of categories (*col. 5, line 50 to col. 6, line 5, most likely paths are collected for each speech frame; these most likely paths are combined to form a plurality of final candidate paths; and the best scoring path is selected as the most likely sub-word sequence*).

11. Regarding claims 7 and 21, Mitchell et al. further disclose wherein the plurality of candidate text unit concatenations are the text unit concatenations with the N-best likelihood values in each said category (*col. 5, line 50 to col. 6, line 5, most likely paths are collected for each speech frame; these most likely paths are combined to form a plurality of final candidate paths; and the best scoring path is selected as the most likely sub-word sequence*).

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12. Regarding claims 8-9 and 22-23, Mitchell et al. further disclose wherein the multiple text unit concatenations associated with each token are used to allow a statistical language model score to be added to the likelihood values associated with said text unit concatenations (*col. 3, line 55 to col. 4, line 13, language model known as grammar is used*), wherein the dynamic programming token passing algorithm is a Viterbi algorithm (*col. 3, lines 55-60*).

13. Regarding claims 11-12 and 25, Mitchell et al. further disclose wherein the tokens and the text unit concatenations are stored in logically separate memories (*col. 5, line 50 to col. 6, line 5*), and wherein a logically separate list data-structure is used to associate tokens with their text unit concatenations or identifiers and corresponding likelihood values (*col. 5, line 50 to col. 6, line 5*), and wherein the mapping means comprises an acoustic model based on Hidden Markov Models (*col. 3, lines 28-40, HMM*).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

14. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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15. Claims 10 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitchell et al. (US 6574595) in view of Chang et al. (US Pub. No. 2002/0178004).

16. Regarding claims 10 and 24, Mitchell et al. fail to specifically disclose wherein the dynamic programming token passing algorithm is a Baum-Welch algorithm. However, Dudemaine et al. teach that the dynamic programming token passing algorithm is a Baum-Welch algorithm (*section 50 on page 4-5*).

Since Mitchell et al. and Chang et al. are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Mitchell et al. by incorporating the teaching of Chang et al. in order to train the speech HMM models using Baum-Welch to improve speech recognition accuracy.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to HUYEN X. VO whose telephone number is (571)272-7631. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 9-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Edouard can be reached on 571-272-7603. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Huyen X Vo/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2626

2/19/2009
